RESTORATION REVIEW

A SOWER WENT FORTH . . .

The seed of the kingdom is not the exclusive possession of a clerical-elite. Every redeemed person has, as the fruit of the Spirit within him, the second-generation seed which has within it the same generative potential as did that from which his own spiritual life sprang. He may not sow it, but keep it hidden on his person, in which case it remains unproductive; or he may sow it. And it is not important that he has only a little, for the quantity is not deleted by its being sown abroad.

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JAMES D. BALES

LOGAN J. FOX

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Review of "Voices of Concern" . . . No. 2

MODERNISM AND MORALS

JAMES D. BALES

There is a lot of repetition in the various chapters of *Voices of Concern.* Since space is so limited, instead of trying to mention a lot of things in each chapter, we plan usually to concentrate on from one to three items.

This article will deal with the essay by Logan Fox; who now views himself as part of our "loyal opposition" (p. 30). He is opposed to the Biblical doctrine of inspiration; thus though he may be loyal to some school of philosophy and psychology, how can he be loyal to New Testament Christianity?

Extremist

There are extremists who lean over backward; and when you try to push them up straight, they fall on their face. They are still extremists; they change only that about which they are extreme. Fox tells us of some extreme positions. As a young man, "Nashville was proud of me." (p. 15) "I had become what Nashville believed in and I could preach 'our' message from A to Z." (p. 16) He had thus arrived; even before he entered college as "a cocky, know-it-all sectarian" (p. 16). Doubtless there were brethren who were proud of him. They may have said many things to encourage him. And there may have been some who had the wrong attitudes and who endorsed wrong attitudes in him. We doubt that some of those who tried to encourage him as a youth realized that he thought so highly of himself. Some of the pats on the back touched sensitive muscles and caused the swelling of the head. In some degree this has happened to all of us, at one time or another. Although I leave Fox's judgment to the Lord, in my opinion he is still an extremist. He had merely changed what he is extreme about. He once seemed to think that most brethren were all right, but now he seems to think that fundamentally they are almost all wrong. This kind of flip-flop is evident in more than one of the "voices of concern."

Modernism and Morals

It is often assumed that modernism undermines faith in the historical accuracy of the Bible, but that it leaves the moral teaching untouched. Although it is true that there are modernists who continue to hold to the moral teachings, they are not only inconsistent but their teaching ultimately undermines Biblical morality. Our generation has seen modernistic bishops who repudiate the miracles and the morals; *Voices of Concern* furnishes us with more than one case where modernism undermined, in at least certain

matters, the integrity of the modernist. Although we do not rejoice in it, this is illustrated in the case of Logan Fox. *Every modernist among us, who is hiding his true colors until he can influence as many people as possible to his way of thinking, is grossly dishonest.* He may dress well, his manners may be polished, his approach may be disarming, his psychology superb, and his vocabulary terrific; but he is a hypocrite. We are not speaking of an individual who is wrestling with problems; but of one who has undergone a fundamental change of faith, and yet feigns Biblical faith in order to continue among us—for whatever purposes he may have in mind.

Fox's Charge of Dishonesty

Some seem to think that it is unchristian to show from a man's own record that he has been dishonest. They take a far dimmer view of the one who exposes dishonesty, regardless of how good his attitude may be, than they take of dishonesty itself. Since it is our duty to point to Fox's dishonesty, as an illustration of what modernism can do, it may be well to show that he asserts that many preachers today are dishonest. He charged: "Our pulpits are filled with men who do not believe what they preach and who dare not preach what they believe." (p. 31). If we tried to uncover some of these hypocrites, would Fox claim that we have a suspicious and heresy-hunting mind? But such hypocrites would come under the censure of Jesus, in Matt. 23. Does Fox think we should knowingly fellowship such hypocrites?

There are doubtless some hypocrites among us, and Fox should know for he was once one of them, but what proof did he give to sustain such a broad charge? If there are such cowards and hypocrites among us, they have no one but themselves to blame for their sinful condition. They should be honest enough to preach what they believe; but they should also be honest enough not to expect to be supported by people who do not believe what they are preaching. It is one thing to preach what one believes; it is another thing to think one has the right to demand support of the very people whom one's preaching is undermining. We are convinced that Logan Fox has highly overstated the matter. Is he judging other people by the way that he was himself for such a long time? If there are individuals so different from us in faith, why don't they go where their faith is?

Logan Fox's Hypocrisy

By 1947 Fox was in fundamental disagreement with us. If I understand him correctly, he started in Lipscomb the fall of 1941 (pp. 15-16). Within six years he came "to the position which I have found convincing now for nearly twenty years." (p. 17). He was faced with the decision as to whether he should leave the church or 'somehow find a way to work on within it." (p. 24). His decision led lim to deceive some of us for years.

What were some of the positions to which he came? Were they basic matters? His attitude toward the inspiration of the Bible changed. He now believes that "next to our position on baptism," our view of the Bible "is the biggest barrier to spiritual growth among us." (p. 19). The dishonesty which his modernism enabled him to practice for years among us, was certainly not an indication that his view of the Bible made a spiritual person out of him. Who was most helpful to Fox in revising his view of the Bible? A book by Harry Emerson Fosdick. In this book Fosdick rejected the Biblical teaching concerning miracles, creation, demons, heaven and hell, and Old Testament teachings concerning Jehovah. Fosdick seemed to think that because Jesus fulfilled and set aside the Old Covenant, we can set aside the New and develop a "newer" Covenant. Fosdick makes the Bible fit an evolutionary framework so that it is what man has wrought in his own experiences, rather than what God revealed through inspired men who confirmed their message with miracles.

Logan Fox has also come to the position of fellowshipping those who have not been buried and raised with Christ in baptism (p. 18).

For years he solicited support from congregations and individuals whom he knew would not support him and his work if they knew his real beliefs. I first visited Japan in 1955. Questions about Fox's views came up but the impression which he left in me was that he was not basically different from the rest of us in his beliefs. One of the brethren, who worked with him at Ibaraki, later told me that when he asked Fox why he wasn't frank with the brethren, the gist of his reply was: "What, and be crucified?" In other words, if he was honest with brethren, he knew they would not support him. This, obviously, is not crucifixion. What we have just said should not arouse suspicion concerning anyone at Ibaraki. I wish the work there well.

We are not implying that Christians are always honest; but in failing to be honest they are failing to live up to the moral teaching of the Bible. The modernist, however, is being consistent when he repudiates Jesus as the authority on morality. So why should he feel bound by Christ's teaching on morality? Although it may not make an impression on a modernist, we need to remind ourselves what the Bible says about those who continue in lies (Rev. 21:8; 22:15).

We regret that reviews must sometimes be personal, but it is important to emphasize that any concealed modernist among us is dishonest. We do not have reference to individuals who are struggling with doubts and questions, but of those who actually hold to a radically different position concerning the authority of the Bible than is held by the church.

E. Stanley Jones and the Spirit

Fox wrote: “But it was hearing E. Stanley Jones and reading his books which finally clarified the problem for me. It all boiled down to one simple fact: if God sent His Holy Spirit to live and work in a man who was not immersed, who was I to refuse to recognize him? And since the evidence of the presence of the Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit, then it is undeniable that regeneration is not always correlated with immersion.” (p. 18). First, unless the baptism is that of a believing penitent, into the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, the baptism is not Biblical baptism; and is thus not the actual washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5) for that person. Not all who have been immersed have been regenerated.

Second, Fox spoke of “one simple fact,” but he did not prove that God has sent His Spirit to live and work in Jones. Fox knows nothing about the Spirit, and His workings, and where He lives, except what is revealed in the Bible. Anything aside from the Bible is his unsupported human opinion. The Spirit is promised to believing penitents who are baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38); and the Corinthians having been baptized into Christ, were told by Paul that their bodies were temples of the Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19-20). As we have brought out, in an examination of certain passages, in our book on *The Holy Spirit and the Christian*, the Spirit dwells in Christians. Fox, consciously or unconsciously, has taken the authority on himself to declare as a fact that the Spirit lived in a man who had not met one of the conditions which God through the Spirit said he must meet. Does Fox know more about the Spirit’s indwelling than does the Spirit Himself? Since we are under authority, and not in authority, we must be submissive to what the Spirit has revealed in the Bible. We do not have the authority to declare exceptions when the Spirit has not declared them.

Third, Fox says that Jones bore the fruit of the Spirit, and this is the proof that the Spirit dwelt in Jones. Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5:22-23. However, for us to see in someone’s lives certain aspects of these, or in some measure all of these, does not mean that the person is a Christian; and that the Spirit lives in him. Taking Gal. 5:22-23 out of the context of other passages of Scripture, one could maintain that being a Christian does not involve either faith in God, Christ, or the Spirit; or in the mercy of God. For the passage, which lists certain moral and spiritual qualities, says nothing about faith in God, Christ, the Spirit, or acceptance of God’s grace being conditions of the Spirit’s indwelling. Ghandi had at least some of these aspects of the fruit of the Spirit; and Jones thought Ghandi was helping to bring in the kingdom of God.

Since the fruit involves moral and spiritual qualities, and since even the Gentiles had some understanding of morality, to some degree some of them would have these qualities. To the extent that anyone follows a moral and spiritual law to that extent it bears some fruit in his life. There are individuals who have been influenced by the leaven of the gospel, and the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of Christians; and yet have not themselves

become Christians. But one is not a Christian just because he has aspects of this fruit. The apostle John mentioned many tests, and some other than the fruit are mentioned in Gal. 5:22-23. See I John 1:5-7, 8-10; 2:3-5; 5:2; 2:6; 2:10; 2:15-17; 2:24; 3:3; 3-17; 3:18; 3:23; 3:24; 4:1-3; 3:6; 4:15; 4:21; 5:4-5; 5:21.

The Holy Spirit works through the word of God in teaching people. But the Spirit does not live in everyone on whom He works through the word. The people on Pentecost had heard the word, but that was not equal to the indwelling of the Spirit. For the Spirit was promised to those who heard and obeyed the word; and this included baptism (Acts 2:38, 40, 41). They received the word before they were baptized (Acts 2:40-41), but they did not received the Spirit until they were baptized (Acts 2:38). All the principles which Jones taught, which are found in the Bible, are principles taught by the Spirit. To the extent he taught them, this is the Spirit's teaching; for they are from the Spirit and not from Jones. To the extent that Jones let the word of the Spirit influence his life, to that extent the Spirit did a work on him and through him. To the extent that Ghandi followed a principle of Jesus, to that extent the word and influence of the Spirit was working through him in that the Spirit's word influenced him and others through him. But if we depend on what the Spirit said through the inspired apostle Peter, we cannot say that the Spirit lived in Jones, or Ghandi.

Fourth, what were some of the things taught by Jones? At the very time Stalin had been starving people to death, and otherwise killing them; and at the very time injustice was rampant in the USSR, Jones was not only willing to work with them, but claimed they were a part of the kingdom. There was abundant evidence available to anyone, with eyes to see, that communism was an evil system with evil fruits. Yet Jones said: "When the Western world was floundering in an unjust and competitive order, and the church was bound up with it and was a part of that order, God reached out and put his hand on the Russian Communists to produce a juster order and to show a recumbent church what it has missed in its own Gospel. That does not mean that God, or we, can approve all they have in that order, nor all they have done to bring that order into being, but it does mean that God through the Communists is judging the injustice and wrongs inherent in our present system. To the degree that the Communists have caught the meanings of the Kingdom of God and have embodied them they are a part of that Kingdom, even if they repudiate that Kingdom in the very act of embodying some of its ideals." (p. 224). Jones' socialism instilled in him some illusions; as it has with many others, as we have brought out in our book *The Phoenix Papers: If Not Treason. . . What?* Communism may be a judgment on the world, but it is not a part of the kingdom. It is diametrically opposed to it in theory and practice; as is clearly shown in our *Two Worlds: Christianity and Communism.* We are referring the interested reader to these books for documentation; which we do not have space for in this review.

Jones was a modernist, and modernism undermines the Bible which is the word of the Spirit. Surely no one who believes the Bible can believe that the Spirit lived in Jones and helped him destroy at least certain parts of the word of the Spirit. Fox's confusion concerning Jones is another illustration showing that when we cut ourselves off from the authority of the Bible, God's word, we are adrift.

Because we will good toward Logan Fox, and others; and because duty, as we see it, demanded it; we have said these things. Although we have found him likeable, and he has some good qualities (how many, is not for me to know), yet none of these things are rooted in his modernism.—*Harding College, Searcy, Ark.*

No two people or group of people can have an affectionate relationship unless they have in common a mutual task.—*Jane Addams*

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A RESPONSE TO J. D. BALES

Logan J. Fox

J. D. Bales misses entirely the significance of the autobiographical form my paper was given, and he leaves untouched the major issues I raised. He chooses to rest his case on (1) the charge that I am an extremist, an immoral (dishonest) person, and a hypocrite; and (2) a caricature of E. Stanley Jones.

In my essay several questions were posed, and I do not choose to shift the discussion to a defense of my character or to an explanation of E. Stanley Jones' true position. I would have been delighted if Bales had come to grips in a straight forward way with the issues I raised. Instead he delivered a politically slanted polemic obviously aimed at stirring emotions rather than stimulating thought. I cannot refrain from expressing my keen disappointment.

In an oblique way Bales does refer to material in my chapter and I shall limit my response to further consideration of three points he touches on.

I. *The Relationship Between a Man's Character and His Faith*

While I shall not get into an argument about my character, I am interested in the relationship between character and faith. In my paper I referred to my observations of men in the church in Nashville, and I accused my brethren of dishonesty. So, perhaps, it is biblical justice that I be judged even as I judged!

But the issue is important, and it is Scriptural. Jesus taught that a tree is known by its fruit (Mt. 7:15-20). J. D. Bales (in one of his books which he failed to mention!) speaks of the "fruit of atheism." And I am in complete agreement with this principle, which has two aspects: (1) a doctrine is to be judged as healthy or unhealthy by its effects in men's lives; (2) a. man's heart can be known by the quality of his life.

With respect to the former aspect, this is precisely the issue I raised. I have seen the lives of men who held to certain doctrines and I have had to conclude that either these doctrines had no noticeable influence for good or had definite influence for bad. Whichever interpretation we take, we must reevaluate the importance of these doctrines, many of which have been made "the fundamentals" among us.

It seems to me that Bales is inconsistent in his position here. When he thinks he sees flaws in my character, he cheerfully ascribes it to my "modernism." When he admits to flaws in the character of the orthodox, it is in spite of their true faith!

I am convinced that the ultimate test of religious doctrines is the character produced. I accept this test for any position I espouse, and, while Bales' judgment of me is only irritating, I shall tremble with all men as I await the judgment of my God. May God have mercy on us all!

II. *What Is a Man to Do When He Finds Himself at Variance with the Accepted Position of the Church?*

Bales seems much disturbed that for twenty years I followed the course of expediency rather than that of transparent honesty. He ignores my recounting (p. 25) of advice I received from one of the most respected men *in* the brotherhood to the effect that I ought to go slow and "try to pull the train." He makes no mention of the difficulty involved in trying to decide what is wise and good. And he pretends he does not know that every day some preacher wrestles with the question, "Should I really think on this matter at this time?"

I clearly stated my reasons for acting as I did (pp. 24-25): (1) My conviction that the church is not a voluntary association which one joins or leaves at will; (2) My conviction that one does not cease being a Christian when one's ideas change; (3) My conviction that if one believes himself to be right, he has no alternative but to try effectively to lead others to this position.

Bales takes the position, common among us, that when a man's thinking no longer coincides with the accepted position in the church he should leave it. This seems to me to be the essence of the very sectarianism the Restoration Movement was born to oppose. When Bales says, "why don't they go where their faith is?" he implies that to be a member of the Church of Christ one must take a certain position. This is creedalism. Perhaps Bales will write out just what it is that a man must think and believe in order to be a member in good standing in the Church of Christ.

The traditional Restoration position is that the church has no position. We have always replied to those asking for the position of the church that one does not know what the church thinks and believes on a particular question until one has asked all the members what they think and believe. Like it or not, that makes for quite a variety. The cure? A creed. Who wants to write it?

I kept watching for one of our more respected leaders to help us with this question of expediency versus honesty. All we get are simplistic statements about "letting the chips fall where they may" and stoney silence about what really goes on. The men I referred to who do not preach what they believe are not young rebels or off-beat revolutionaries. They are the best-known men in our brotherhood, the presidents of our colleges, the editors of our papers, the ministers of our largest churches. These men are my friends and I know their struggles. I do not condemn them. I merely voice my concern that truth is coming off second best in the decisions these men are making.

Still, I must confess that I'm not sure even yet that I've made a better decision. Can I do more good than they, or will they do more good by acting more expediently? I do not claim to know the answer, but I insist that the question should be raised.

III. *How We Can Recognize the Presence of the Spirit*

Bales says, "Fox knows nothing about the Spirit, and His workings, and where He lives, except what is revealed in the Bible." I could not agree more wholeheartedly than I do. It is from the Scriptures, and nowhere else, that I learned the nature of the Spirit so that I can recognize His work.

I learn that the Spirit is free like the wind, blowing where it will (Jn. 3:8) ; I learn that the fruit of the Spirit can be recognized (Gal. 5:22, 23); I learn that it is blasphemous to ascribe the Spirit's work to the Devil (Mk. 3:29); I learn that the Spirit is a gift (Acts 2:38); I learn that, while the Spirit has words of its own (1 Cor. 2:13) , it is in contrast to law (Gal. 5:23) and the letter (2 Cor. 3:6).

Bales loses me when he starts distinguishing between the Spirit working through people and dwelling in them. It would seem more helpful to stress the "measure" of the Spirit (Jn. 3:34). Some people have only a little of the Spirit; some have an abundant measure; and Jesus had the Spirit without measure. But, my point was and is that we can tell how much of the Spirit is in a man by the presence of the fruit of the Spirit. And if Gandhi shows more of the Spirit than a professing Christian, then he must have opened his heart to God more than the Christian did. He might even be one of the surprised on the day of judgment who didn't know they had served the Lord (Mt. 25).

In conclusion I must say that I am dissatisfied with the way Bales expressed his "goodwill" toward me and in the way he performed his "duty" to criticize my position. To his credit I must say that he is the only one who either publicly or privately has shown enough interest to criticize what I have written.

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Things That Matter Most. . . No.2

A CHRISTIAN VIEW OF BEAUTY

Even though the great artist Anatole France said that we shall never be able to determine why a thing is beautiful, we think it proper for Christians to exercise their aesthetic sense and make inquiry into the nature of beauty. We talk about things being *right* and *wrong,* and if we probe into the meanings of these terms we are concerned with ethics. We speak of *real* and *unreal,* which gets us into metaphysics. And *valid* and *invalid,* which involves us in logic. We speak of *holy* and *unholy,* which are theological in import.

And we refer to things as *beautiful* and *ugly,* which get us into aesthetics. All these evaluations are part of our everyday life, but such judgments should be meaningful. We should understand why the things we judge to be good are indeed good. And why is wrong wrong? Just so terms like *beautiful* and *ugly* should be appropriately used by the Christian. These are among the things that matter most.

It might prove to be an insightful experience for us to list those things we consider the most beautiful. And what are the ugliest things you've seen?

There is almost universal agreement about the beauty of a sunset, a starlit sky, a waterfall, a forest of evergreens. We also reach virtual agreement as to the ugliness of death, slums, erosion of the soil, a wrecked automobile. But for the most parr beauty is subjective. To many people Elizabeth Taylor is beautiful; to others of us she is not. I see beauty in a well-executed forward pass in a football game; to many others it is nothing of the kind. As I look back over my childhood. I can recall nothing more attractive to my sight than a well-proportioned watermelon cooling on the back porch. It became even more beautiful when placed on the kitchen table where a long knife was gently thrust into it, cracking it open from one end to the other, exposing its rich redness.

Others see beauty in the five-pound bass on the end of their line; others in a birdie on the golf course; others in a great speech in the halls of congress. Most of us have our greatest experience with beauty in beholding our blushing bride at the altar or in the squirming face of the newly-born baby in our arms. Most of us do not find our paychecks hard to look at, and sometimes a diploma or degree can be lovelier to behold than any sunset.

We are saying, as did the Jewish philosopher Spinoza, that a thing is beautiful to us because it is desired. This would make the most undesirable things the ugliest. This is what makes cars, homes and women beautiful to so many of us. We view things as beautiful in

reference to their importance to us. That nail for want of which a kingdom was lost would have been lovelier to behold than a trunk of jewels. To a man lost at sea no sound or sight could be more beautiful than a rescue plane circling above him.

Here we have the key to the Christian view of beauty. Prayer becomes beautiful to us the more we desire communion with God. So with unity, faith, worship. It is only after we have experienced the ugliness of faction and division with all their pain and heartache that we are in a position to see the beauty of sharing the common life. It is in the face of doubt and fear that we see the loveliness of a triumphant faith—a deep trust that through Christ we are more than conquerors. How beautiful that is! And it is in our realization of both the differences between men and the inadequacy of man that we are struck with the miraculous beauty of Christian worship. Rich and poor, the sophisticated and the simple, young and old, the poet and the literalist, all alike and together can worship the Lord of glory. What beauty that is, whether it happens in a palacious edifice or in a dingy hovel!

An Illustration of Beauty

One of the most beautiful places on earth to me is Bethany, which I prefer to identify without naming the state in which it is located. Not that I have anything against West Virginia, but Bethany is such a lovely name and the village is so important in the history of the cause I so deeply love that I prefer simply to say *Bethany.* Isn't it a beautiful word? It is suggestive of the presence of God. In the *New Testament* it is a village where our Lord was anointed and where He raised Lazarus from the dead. In 1963 I was privileged to visit this little hamlet of some 750 souls and see the old church edifice that now stands where the home of Martha and Mary once stood. When I descended into the tomb of Lazarus, which they believe is authentic, and stood by the ledge hewn from the stone wall where Lazarus once lay, it seems that I could hear the cry of the Messiah in the distance, "Lazarus, come forth!"

There amidst the flicker of my guide's candlelight I found beauty, despite the dullness and dampness of a deep and dark cave. The village itself is not appealing to the eyes and the earth looks as if it has been raped by the elements, but it was all a beautiful experience.

So it was with another Bethany I visited in Palestine, the place where John baptized, which recent research indicates is properly called Bethany. See John 1:28 in a modern translation. Hucksters were selling small bottles filled with water taken from the place where Jesus was baptized. I made my way to the traditional site where the Baptist proclaimed the coming kingdom and immersed the penitent for the remission of their sins, and of course where our Lord Himself was immersed. It was a dirty, muddy little river, though sufficiently large to do a lot of immersing. I just had to get into that water, as I had the waters of the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean. So with shoes, clothes, and all I piled

myself in. Anywhere else it would have been silly. But there it was something beautiful to me, as was the muddy little stream.

Bethany. A lovely name, *isn't* it? No wonder Alexander Campbell changed the name of the little hamlet where he and others were to do such important things from Buffalo to Bethany.

The physical beauty of our Bethany in America is sometimes breathtaking. I recall an early morning walk with my wife on a wintry morn amidst undisturbed snow. Inches of snow lay quietly upon the finger-like branches of the countless trees, accented by icicles brightened by the soft morning sun. Valleys and hills stretched out endlessly towards the blue horizon as if crowded with freshly-washed sheep with their full measure of white wool. It was a winter wonderland.

Springtime is equally thrilling. The verdant hills with their trees of many species defy description. The fresh air is surely perfumed by the presence of nymphs who dance amongst the tree-tops in the spring. The water brooks move majestically, as if inspired by the music of a million birds. The old Buffalo, witness to a legion of new births, twists and turns through the hills as if still determined to be a maker of history.

Autumn at Bethany is a suitable symbol of the unity its fathers sought to restore. The air is crisp and vital. The sunshine is warm and confident. The robins and the orioles have built their nests and nurtured their young, and now they make their annual pilgrimage to points south, assuring us by their hesitant and belated departures that they shall return, fitly symbolizing renewal through recovery, the crowning effort of Bethany's heroes. The gallant trees, large and small and innumerable, take on all the colors of the rainbow, assuring us that only God can make a tree, and depicting the unity in diversity that both God and His church bear witness to.

It was these old hills of Bethany that welcomed the Campbells and cradled the Restoration Movement. For all this I love the place. It describes for me, far better than can my pen, the meaning of beauty. It is truly a theatre of the glory of God.

The beauty of Bethany found its highest expression in the unity meeting conducted there last summer in honor of Alexander Campbell, who died a century ago after giving his life to the cause of ecumenicity. Like the trees in the fall with their multiplicity of colors, we had virtually every shade of brotherhood opinion represented. It was the first time for many of them to study and pray with their estranged brothers in Christ. The mutual love that prevailed overshadowed the things that have for too long divided us. It was fitting that this effort toward unity should take place at the home of Campbell, who labored so tirelessly for so long for such an ideal. It was at the same time tragic that Campbell's own heirs of the Restoration Movement were themselves splintered into numerous sects.

But it was a thing of beauty to see these men sit down together in the Old Church where the Campbells themselves gathered each Lord's Day a century before. The old meeting-house, long in disuse, was opened for this special occasion. The speakers represented the three major wings of discipledom. We all sat together as brothers around the Father's table. We worshiped together. In that hour at least we were indeed one. We were brothers, and we were treating each other as such. To glance about the room and see brotherhood leaders—ministers, professors, editors—sitting side by side before the Lord's Table, men who supposed only a few years ago that such an experience would be impossible, was a beautiful thing to behold. Like all of nature about us, it demonstrated the beauty of unity in diversity.

Conditions of Beauty

Even though beauty is largely *subjective*, meaning that it is dependent upon our own personal desires, it nevertheless follows that certain conditions must prevail if a thing is to be deemed beautiful. Men may justifiably differ as to whether a piece of abstract art is beautiful, but something is seriously wrong when a man sees a bursted water pipe as a thing of beauty.

1. *Appropriateness.*

Even gold is not lovely to look upon if misappropriated. In Pro. 11:22 we read: "Like a gold ring in a swine's snout is a beautiful woman without discretion." When a gold ring is placed upon a finger in symbol of matrimony, it is indeed beautiful. But in a hog's nose it loses its beauty. Solomon is saying that fair woman likewise loses her beauty when she behaves indiscretely.

To me few things are lovelier than a library of books. Books can mean so much: companionship, knowledge, freedom, friendship. A man's books become a part of him, and what is more beautiful than a man with his books, ever searching for more light to walk by.

But the library loses its beauty when it is inherited by a giddy simpleton who sees books only as decoration and who toys with them for the novelty of it. His reference to "my library" does not have the meaning that it had with the previous owner. The beauty is gone because it is no longer appropriate.

2. *Perfection or Integrity.*

David mentions in Psalms 27 that the one thing he asks for is that he might "behold the beauty of the Lord." Psa. 96:6 reads: "Honor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary." The Lord is beautiful because of His perfection. God has complete integrity. This is why we should trust Him. He will do what He says He will do. God is truth and truth is integrity. This is why we view truth as beautiful and falsehood as ugly.

Ezekiel rebukes the proud city of Tyre for saying "1 am perfect in beauty," for Tyre lacked integrity. The prophet said to her: "You corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor" (Ezek. 28-17). Here is an instance of earthly beauty (as man would see it) that is ugly before the eyes of God. Whereas Psa. 149:4 shows that God gives beauty to the humble. "The Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). What man, with all his false values, sees as ugly the Lord may see as beautiful, and what man sees as beautiful the Lord may see as ugly.

3. *Harmony and Diversity.*

Congregations and homes alike are beautiful when they are harmoniously blended in love. There is diversity aplenty in every family and church in the land, and there is beauty when that diversity achieves oneness. There is no loveliness in sameness. Men are so very different in so many ways, and their religion is a thing of beauty when because of their love for Christ and for each other they are one. Unity in diversity is the only kind of unity that is possible.

"God has made everything beautiful in its time; also he has put eternity into man's mind" (Ecc. 3:11). God not only made the tree, but he framed it with many elements of nature. He not only made man, but placed him in an atmosphere of great variety. Beauty is unity in diversity.

The Beauty of Holiness

The Bible says many interesting things about beauty. Those who proclaim the gospel are said to have beautiful feet (Rom. 10:15). We are told that the beauty of old men is in their gray hair (Pro. 20:29). Many women are referred to as being beautiful, but Absalom is the only man so described, perhaps because "from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him" (2 Sam. 14:25). David's eyes are described as beautiful (1 Sam. 16:12) .

Both the temple and Jerusalem are mentioned as being beautiful, as well as ornaments, garments, and crowns. The glorious Messiah is said to be beautiful (Isa. 4:2), but the suffering servant of Isa. 53, which is descriptive of the humanity of Jesus, plainly says that He has "no beauty that we should desire him."

There is a deceitful beauty: "Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised" (Pro. 31:30). And so we have the young man being warned: "Do not desire her beauty in your heart, and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes" (Pro. 6:25).

The reference that best summarizes the Christian view of beauty is I Chron. 16:29: "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." This meets the standards for beauty: it is appropriate, it is perfect and has integrity, and it is harmonious. Rich and poor alike, master and slave together, men from all walks of life, regardless of their differences in

color, race and ideology, can worship the Lord. And they are to do so with that holiness without which no man can see the Lord (Heb. 12:15).

Like Absalom's body that was without blemish, and was therefore beautiful, just so our lives are to be surrendered to the Lord in their entirety. This makes God beautiful to us, as well as all His creation. We will then appreciate the beauty of His purposes. Christ will be "the diadem of beauty" and He will dwell in our hearts through faith. Life will then, and only then, be a beautiful experience, despite its many hardships. And heaven will be to us an eternity of beauty with God, the author of all beauty.

"Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it." (Psa. 90:17)—*the Editor*

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OUR TRADITIONS, OR THE SPIRIT'S GUIDANCE?

BRIAN MUSTAIN

In keeping with our basically unimaginative human nature, we so often find ourselves as individuals falling into what we call "ruts." These are, from a more religious point of view, merely clever traps which the devil sets for us; and we, of course, are in no position to match wits with the Trickster. Many of us are at least halfway aware of Satan's tactics. Indeed, most of the people who sympathize with this periodical are quite adept at pointing out the lamentable but ironclad traditions into which the restoration Christians have become trapped. It might behoove us, however, to turn the big guns onto our own ranks; those who are labeled "liberals" have some targets which need to be exploded.

First of all, we are caught in a rut of criticism. If Satan can get us to be obsessed with the evils of the brotherhood, he will be happy indeed. Perhaps even *Restoration Review* needs to be cautious. Not that the criticisms are necessarily invalid; it is just that we can become so negative that we will be as guilty of preaching anti-Church of Christ as others are in preaching Church of Christ, while the primary aim of all should be to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

A second rut into which many "liberals" fall is an obsession for the Restoration Movement itself. We cannot afford to limit our realm of inquiry to this movement. This in itself is sectarianism. We need to extend our dialogue to other groups; and yet we must beware of making an idol of dialogue, as some have done.

We think we have some insights of which the brotherhood has been ignorant. But how do we go about promulgating these ideas? We publish periodicals in which we make known our views. We hold seminars on fellowship. Leaders of the "liberal" groups speak whenever they can on current issues. But is it enough? We are perhaps falling into the

same error of which we accuse others. We are putting too much emphasis on fellowship, and not enough trust in the power of God in the matter. *We* can convince very few people of the need to widen their views. When a person begins to see the concept of grace, is it because of intellectual persuasion or because God revealed it to him? Phil. 3:15 says, "Let those who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, *God* will reveal that also to you." I Cor. 2 says over and over again that the deepest truths of Christianity are made known to the *spiritual* man, and that only through the Holy Spirit can we understand these things.

Christianity is not communicated by exegesis and by harassing people with the truth. It is revealed by God to the individual. This is the main point of I Cor. 2; and Paul prayed that God would *"give* (the Ephesians) a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power in us who believe . . ."

All the blessings which we seek, and which our brothers need, are centered around a spiritual (i.e., a super-natural, and *not* an intellectual) realization of the love of Christ, of His grace, and the personal relationship we can have with Him. If an extremely legalistic brother were to grasp the full scope of the love of Jesus, he would no longer believe that I am going to hell for believing certain "heresies." But can I teach him this love? Can I convince him by my brilliant exegetical analyses of the passages which deal with grace? No. Can I make him see these things by any of my own doings? I cannot. For the love of Christ surpasses knowledge. Is it a paradox that Paul prayed for the Ephesians to know this unknowable love? No! The full knowledge of love and of grace is spiritual, and supernatural. *It cannot be communicated,'* it can only be granted as a gift of God.

Is this to say that we should give up all our efforts? In a very real sense, *yes!* We should give up all *our* efforts, and personally apply God's advice to Jehoshaphat in II Chron. 20. "You will not need to fight in this battle; take your position, *stand still,* and see the victory of the Lord on your behalf." What we do is in vain, unless it is Christ who is doing His work through us. He will guide us, if we will let Him. William Bright, director of Campus Crusade for Christ, has pointed out that the branch does not "try" to bear fruit anymore than a light bulb "tries" to shine. For too long, we have either been trying to bear fruit on our own, or at the most asking God for help in our efforts to broaden people's views. But let us stop asking God to help us in *our* efforts; let us rather say, "Lord, I do not ask that You help me in what I do. I want You to tell me what to do, and then to carry out that work Yourself through me; for I will ruin Your plans if I try to carry them out my way." Let us yield ourselves to God, and let *Him* work through us in *His* plans. There is quite a difference!

Again, this is not to say that we should cease working toward the goals of "restoring" the Restoration Movement, *if* this is what the Spirit directs us to do. But I sense that there is not always an attitude of love on our part, and that any of us are trying to spread our ideas of the "truth" by our own efforts. One brother has shown us a very important observation: In John 17, Jesus' prayer for unity was addressed to God—not to us. If we long to see that prayer answered, we should cease trying to answer it ourselves; we must yield our hearts, our minds, our tongues, our pens to God. Then our words will not be from our own minds; *but only to the extent that we let Him replace our minds with His spirit.* Then God will be speaking through us. Our efforts will be so much easier and much more fruitful.

Our constant plea should not be for more dialogue and fellowship. We must rather write and preach about fellowship with Christ. If we ourselves do not have such a relationship with Christ that He guides us directly and unequivocally, and such that we actually have the mind of Christ, then we should seek this relationship with all our beings, instead of trying to instruct the brotherhood in matters of fellowship. When we all begin to *know* personally Him whom we have believed, then the fellowship and love will follow.—*Brian Mustain is a student at Rice University*

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THE THIN CROOKED LINE

EDWIN S. GLEAVES

Anyone honestly concerned with Christian unity on the basis of the Scriptures can hardly fail to encounter the problem of Biblical interpretation. He who sees no problems usually professes that he does not "interpret"; he simply reads the Bible for what it says, or he invokes the well-used dictum of Discipleship, "We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent." But twenty centuries of various interpretations of Holy Writ would seem to belie the finality of such a simple rule, until, at least, it answers the questions, "*What* does the Bible say, and *how* does one decide when the Bible *really means* what it says?"

No facetiousness is implied in these questions; they are dreadfully serious questions on which every religious group must decide its position sooner or later. Among certain theological circles, the mythological view of the Bible certainly puts more emphasis on the "how" than the "what"; but even among more fundamentalist bodies, the lack of agreement upon *what* the Bible says throws the issue back upon the fact that somewhere along the line, someone is saying, "Yes, this commandment applies, and that one doesn't." Why?

The tortuous processes of rationalization through which one religious group may go in order to arrive at a certain interpretation of a given scripture, while another denomination derives precisely the opposite view, are, of course, rooted in psychological and sociological phenomenon which themselves are deserving of intensive study by experts, but at least one reason for the manifold interpretations of Scripture is inherent in an outstanding fact about the Bible itself: that in richness of figurative language-simile, metaphor, personification, symbolism, allegory, etc.—the Bible is unsurpassed in all literature, a fact at least partially recognized by anyone who does not take literally the statements "The Lord is my shepherd" and "I am the Good Shepherd."

Indeed, the primary approach that the Hebrew people, primitives that they were, took toward theology was a figurative, non-literal one. Rather than dealing in the sophisticated abstractions of philosophy, the Hebrew poet or prophet stated with simple grandeur: "The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away"; "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God"; "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" "Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock"; "The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower." To the unlearned but imaginative Hebrew, God could best be understood, and his own relationship to God expressed, through images related to his everyday experience. By such a means he gradually began to comprehend that which otherwise would have remained incomprehensible. And amazingly the figurative language of Hebrew poetry is as meaningful to most people today as it was for the lonely shepherd of the Palestinian hills centuries ago.

If we concede even the presence of figurative language in the Old Testament, we have no reason to think that it terminated with the coming of the New Covenant. In fact, the greatest Jewish teacher of all elevated the allegory to its highest form in the parables that He shared with His disciples. He persisted in the metaphorical tradition of the Hebrews: "I am the door"; "I am the light of the world"; "I am the vine"; and to the dismay of the doggedly literal Pharisees he answered questions with riddles, and demonstrated his principles of righteous living through perplexing symbols of his own. When He and His disciples left commands and examples to posterity through figurative statements and symbolic actions they condemned the Pharisees of later generations to eternal dissension among themselves. And when the heirs of a vigorous movement dedicated to restoring unity among all Christians in the name of New Testament Christianity finds itself the progenitor of numerous and contentious splinter groups, then we may safely look for the Pharisaical spirit at work. It is one of the saddest ironies of American religious history that the Church of Christ, which proclaims to the world its dedication to the principle of Christian unity, has *never* in its history as a separate movement united with anything or anybody.

Again, the reasons for this dissentient spirit are distressingly complex, but at least one reason can be traced, I believe, to our handling of figurative language in the Bible—not that we cannot see the figurative nature of some passages, but that we are simply inconsistent among ourselves and uncharitable toward those who do not share our inconsistencies Even our legalistic principles of example, direct command, and necessary inference do not seem to help when we have already prescribed a special interpretation. For example, Christ, in order to demonstrate humility and service, told His disciples, after washing their feet, "If I then, your Lord and Master have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done for you." There we have it: the Bible has spoken and if Christ's *example* (and statement that it is an example) and *command* were not enough, Paul mentions it again as a requirement for a widow "to be taken into the number." Yet today, of all the Protestant groups claiming, in some manner at least, to follow the Bible, only one sect of the Baptists finds in this passage a command and example binding upon Christians today. The rest of us, including the Church of Christ, have simply decided that since footwashing was a custom of the day the command has only a *symbolic* value and we carry it out in principle by showing our humility in more modern ways.

Footwashing, however, is no isolated case of our updating the scriptures; it is simply the most obvious. The holy kiss, the head covering for women, the ministry of healing, the laying on of hands, anointing the sick with oil, holding all things in common—all go the way of footwashing, and he who tries to carry out these commands literally is, according to our unwritten creed, either wasting his time in his misguided sincerity or making trouble for those of us who know better. The same goes for those of our brethren who insist on believing the parts of Revelation which point to the thousand-year reign of Christ. This too is only symbolic, we say, just as are so many of the numbers cited by the writer of Revelation, and even by Christ himself when he spoke of seventy-times seven But somewhere between these "nonessential" points of doctrine and others on which we "hold the line," we have drawn a thin and exceedingly crooked line which only the mind of the most discriminating and legalistic observer can perceive. Perhaps the line becomes most tenuous as it defines our views of the Lord's Supper and baptism.

The Lord's Supper, it is averred, is basically a symbol (the Catholic claims of transubstantiation to the contrary), a symbol of Christ's body and blood. The statements "This is my body" and "This is my blood" were not meant to be taken literally; we eat the Lord's Supper in a token remembrance of the first Communion. But, one may reply, do we actually eat the Lord's Supper, or do we merely take a pinch of bread and a sip of wine, symbolic of the whole meal itself? (The Corinthians, you remember, went to the other extreme and made the Supper into a gluttonous banquet.) We thus reduce the Lord's Supper to a *symbol of the symbol*, letting these fractions of the meal represent the meal

which itself is symbolic—an interpretation and a practice which is generally harmonious with most of the rest of the Protestant world. But is it, to repeat, a *symbolic* act in which a part suffices for the whole—a manner of interpretation which should help us to understand why today only a minority of the Protestant world insists on complete immersion for baptism.

Few scholars deny that Biblical baptism was by immersion, or that the word "baptism" actually means "to dip." Much of the Protestant world has simply applied the same thinking to baptism that we have to the Lord's Supper: a part will suffice for the whole, a little water for much; a symbol of the symbol is all that is necessary. If in so doing some groups lose sight of the basic purposes of baptism, they can scarcely be condemned by a group which in our legalistic adherence to the forms of the Lord's Supper has in the main made a mechanical travesty of what we claim to be our central act of worship.

It is not difficult to see, then, that the simple principles of interpreting symbolically Biblical practices and substituting a part for the whole can quite easily be applied to areas such as church organization (the first century church was only a primitive and symbolic beginning of the great Church to follow), qualification of elders and deacons (these are principles, not absolutes), and several other "matters of faith" which we have bound upon the world at large. Thus does a great segment of Christendom claim that they too are following the principles of the Bible, while rarely claiming, however, a monopoly on understanding.

In other words, it seems unlikely that the Church of Christ has found the final answer to the question of what is figurative in the Bible and what is not—of exactly *when* and *how* it speaks to us today.

If as heirs to the noble aims of the Restoration Movement we still seek for unity on the basis of the Scripture, then I believe that we must make a significant breakthrough and admit at least two things: (1) the figurativeness and thus the ambiguity of some of the language of the Bible, and (2) our own fallibility as human beings who still see through a glass darkly. Only by recognizing that we, like all students of the Bible, consciously or unconsciously select, cut, weigh, and pass individual judgment upon the scriptures and their intent will we ever grant this same privilege to others and perhaps offer to at least some of them the hand of fellowship. Such tolerance should force every Christian to examine his position and that of his neighbor with equal scrutiny, and it should jar him from the smug and self-righteous assurance of doctrinal infallibility for which the Pharisees received the most scathing condemnation of our Lord.

—Edwin S. *Gleaves was recently a professor of English at David Lipscomb College and Peabody College. He is now at School of Librarianship, University of Washington in Seattle.*

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BOOK NOTES

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